Bijlage 1

Nederlandse bijdrage aan EU stakeholder consultatie "Effective reduction of noise generated by rail freight wagons in the European Union"

Railway noise reduction at source is a critical issue for the further development of railway transport in Europe, especially where railway lines are crossing conurbations). Railway noise must be reduced at source because this is by far the most effective means of noise reduction. Freight wagons account for much of that noise Already in 1996 the European Commission published a "Green paper" where rail freight wagons were pinpointed for measures. In 2006 all new wagons have to fulfill standards (TSI) that can only be met by installing modern brakes. Policy that addresses older wagons have until now only resulted in a only a small percentage of wagons that are retrofitted. Research has shown that more that 80% silent wagons in a train retrofitting is needed to make freight trains less noisy.
Noise reduction for railway freight wagons needs to be addressed at European level because wagons are used internationally. In the Netherlands railway infrastructure investments are being made with the assumption of 80% silent railway freight wagons by 2020 (either new TSI compliant wagons or retrofitted existing wagons). Under this condition the infrastructure investment program Programma Hoogfrequent Spoorverkeer (approximately €2bln) includes €60mln additional noise measures connected to the infrastructure. This €60mln figure could double in case of insufficient progress of railway noise reduction in rail freight wagons in order to facilitate the railway market to develop within existing legal framework of maximum exposure to railway noise identified per line section. Otherwise, no growth of train traffic will be possible.

For an effective European approach the following elements must be addressed:

- Making use of the 2013 authorization of LL-blocks for railway wagons and where possible further support use of low-noise technology. Innovation and authorization of new technology remains important;
- Make use of the funds reserved in the Connecting Europe Facility, according to the compromise reached in the triologue between Council, EP rapporteur and European Commission, to enable financing for retrofitting existing rail freight wagons. Especially in the first half of the EU budget 2014-2020 this European funding is crucial for accelerating the speed of retrofitting, i.a. on corridor Rotterdam - Genoa;
- For making use of the Connecting Europe Facility it should be made clear to which extend Member States can co-finance directly retrofitting of rail freight wagons either to wagon owners or to railway undertakings or both;
- Facilitating Member States to introduce as a temporary measure Noise Differentiated Track Access charges by an implementing Act as foreseen in directive 2012/34/EU that supports Member States wanting to accelerate retrofitting rate and identify a EU-compliant easy way to introduce it. The implementing act should not slow down the efforts in any way of Member States that have already introduced incentive schemes for retrofitting;

- Banning noisy rail freight wagons by requiring compliance with TSI Noise limits by a certain date (e.g. 2020) from the European railway market must be studied carefully but is probably an essential element in the needed package of measures to achieve a cost-effective way of reducing railway noise at source. In the further studying of this scenario costs and benefits should be identified and scenario's be made. E.g. is it usefull in

  such scenario's to differentiate in such a ban between internationally operating railway freight wagons and national wagons or to exclude isolated networks from the approach. Banning noisy wagons should be addressed at European level to maintain interoperability of the European railway system.